

PTQ5892

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ACTION SCT-00

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-08	ACDE-00	AID-00	ARA-01	A-00	CA-02
	CCO-00	CG-00	CIAE-00	COME-00	CTME-00	OASY-00	DODE-00
	DOEE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-01	FAAE-00
	FBIE-00	UTED-00	H-01	IMMC-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	INSE-00
	L-01	ADS-00	MMP-00	M-00	NRCE-00	NSAE-00	NSCE-00
	OCS-03	OIS-01	OMB-01	OPIC-01	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00
	P-00	CIO-00	SP-00	SSO-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00
	USSS-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00	DRL-09	G-00	/031W

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7060
INFO AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM//SCCC//
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BUENOS AIRES 003587

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: PTER, PGOV, AR
SUBJECT: COMMEMORATING AMIA: THREE YEARS IS TOO LONG
- FOR MANY ARGENTINES

1. SUMMARY: ON THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE JULY 1994
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TERRORIST BOMBING THAT KILLED 86 AND INJURED HUNDREDS IN

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
DATE/CASE ID: 15 MAY 2008 200601030

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BUENOS AIRES, THE JEWISH COMMUNITY GATHERED AT THE SITE OF THE BLAST TO HONOR THE VICTIMS AND TO DEMAND GREATER EFFORTS BY THE GOA TO BRING THOSE RESPONSIBLE TO JUSTICE. THE CROWD, CONSIDERABLY LARGER THAN IN EITHER OF THE TWO PREVIOUS ANNIVERSARY EVENTS, WAS IN NO MOOD FOR PALLIATIVES, AS THEY RESORTED TO HURLING INSULTS AT GOVERNMENT LEADERS WHO WERE IN ATTENDANCE. REFLECTING THE GROWING SPLIT AMONG COMMUNITY LEADERS AND OUTRAGED FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS, THE MULTITUDE ALMOST CONTINUOUSLY INTERRUPTED REMARKS BY DR. RUBEN BERAJA, PRESIDENT OF THE ARGENTINE DELEGATION OF JEWISH ASSOCIATIONS (DAIA), WITH WHISTLES AND JEERS.

2. IN SPITE OF THEIR ANGER AND FRUSTRATION AT THE PERCEIVED LACK OF GOVERNMENT SUPPORT FOR THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE BOMBING, EVEN THE MOST ADAMANT SPEAKERS NOTED JUDGE JUAN JOSE GALEANO'S STEADFAST, IF SO FAR UNFRUITFUL, DILIGENCE IN SEEKING THE IDENTITY OF THE PERPETRATORS. A SIMULTANEOUS EVENT HELD IN FRONT OF THE MAIN COURTHOUSE DREW MANY HUNDREDS MORE WHO WERE EAGER TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH BOTH THE LACK OF PROGRESS IN THE AMIA CASE AND THE SUPREME COURT'S MORIBUND INVESTIGATION INTO THE 1992 BOMBING OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY. BOTH EVENTS INTERTWINED REFERENCES TO THE TWO TERRORIST BOMBINGS AND THE MORE RECENT MURDER OF PHOTO JOURNALIST JOSE LUIS CABEZAS AS EVIDENCE OF A LACK OF WILL ON THE PART OF THE MENEM ADMINISTRATION TO END THE PERCEIVED IMPUNITY FOR FIGURES SOMEHOW LINKED TO THE GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

3. ON THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF THE JULY 18, 1994, BOMBING OF THE ARGENTINE JEWISH CULTURAL CENTER (AMIA), ANGER AND GRIEF

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COMBINED TO MAKE THE CROWD ATTENDING A COMMEMORATIVE EVENT AT THE SITE A BIT UNRULY AND AGITATED. HOWEVER, AT EXACTLY 9:53 AM, THE MOMENT OF THE BLAST THREE YEARS AGO, THE IMMENSE CROWD GREW QUIET AND A SIREN WAILED FOR ONE MINUTE IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE TRAGIC EVENT. THEN, FIVE PEOPLE TOOK TURNS SLOWLY READING THE NAMES AND AGES OF EACH OF THE 86 FATALITIES OVER A PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM THAT COVERED SEVERAL CITY BLOCKS IN EACH DIRECTION. THOSE BLOCKS WERE LITERALLY PACKED WITH ONLOOKERS. POLOFF ATTENDING THE EVENT WAS STRUCK BY THE SHEER EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF THE READING OF THE NAMES;

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MANY IN THE CROWD -- FROM TEENAGERS TO THE ELDERLY -- HAD TEARS IN THEIR EYES. SOME, OVERCOME, WERE QUIETLY HELPED TO THE SIDE OF THE STREET BY THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILY SO THAT THEY COULD SIT AND RECOVER.

4. THE MOOD OF AGITATION RETURNED QUICKLY, NONETHELESS. ISOLATED JEERS AND INSULTS CAME FROM THE CROWD, AIMED AT THE GOVERNMENT DIGNITARIES WHO WERE ASSEMBLED NEAR THE PODIUM. UNLIKE PREVIOUS YEARS, THE MENEM ADMINISTRATION HAD DECIDED TO HAVE LARGE AND HIGH-LEVEL REPRESENTATION AT THE CEREMONY. THIS INCLUDED MINISTER COORDINATOR RODRIGUEZ, INTERIOR MINISTER CORACH, FOREIGN MINISTER DI TELLA, LABOR MINISTER CARO FIGUEROA, AND NEWLY APPOINTED JUSTICE MINISTER GRANILLO OCAMPO. AT VARIOUS INTERVALS, THE CROWD CALLED IN UNISON, "JUSTICE!" AND THEN, "GET OUT!"

5. IN THE LONGEST REMARKS OF THE EVENT, A SURVIVING SPOUSE, WHO IS ALSO ACTIVE IN THE WEEKLY VIGILS OUTSIDE THE CENTRAL BUENOS AIRES COURTHOUSE DEMANDING JUSTICE IN THE AMIA CASE, DELIVERED A STIRRING SPEECH RECOUNTING HER FAMILY'S MORNING THE DAY OF THE BLAST. AT 7:00, HER HUSBAND AROSE TO HELP THE

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KIDS GET READY FOR SCHOOL. AT 8:15, SHE RUSHED TO GET READY HERSELF FOR WORK THAT DAY, AND SHE RECALLED THE BRIEF KISSES EXCHANGED BY ALL THE FAMILY AS THEY SEPARATED IN THEIR DAILY, ROUTINE MANNER, NEVER SUSPECTING FOR A MOMENT THAT THAT WOULD BE THE LAST KISS SHE SHARED WITH HER HUSBAND. HOW MANY FAMILIES, SHE WONDERED, HOW MANY CHILDREN, AND GRANDPARENTS, AND OTHERS SUFFERED THE SAME THING THAT FATEFUL MORNING ON JULY 18, 1994. WHEN WILL THE GOVERNMENT DECIDE THAT IT SHOULD DO MORE TO SOLVE THIS HORRENDOUS CRIME AND BRING THE ASSASSINS TO JUSTICE. "ASSASSINS," SHOUTED THE CROWD, OVER AND OVER.

6. THE OTHER PRINCIPAL SPEECH OF THE EVENT, GIVEN BY DR. RUBEN BERAJA, PRESIDENT OF THE DAIA, BARELY STARTED BEFORE WHISTLES AND JEERS CAME FROM THE CROWD. THE REACTION CLEARLY INDICATED THAT THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IS SIGNIFICANTLY SPLIT OVER HOW IT SHOULD DEAL WITH THE LACK OF PROGRESS IN THE AMIA AND EMBASSY BOMBING INVESTIGATIONS. BERAJA IS WIDELY NOTED FOR HIS STRONG SUPPORT FOR JUDGE GALEANO'S EFFORTS AND A MORE

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MODERATE CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTIONS. MORE STRIDENT MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY ARE QUESTIONING THIS STRATEGY, ALTHOUGH MOST DO NOT DISPUTE GALEANO'S GOOD FAITH IN CARRYING OUT HIS INVESTIGATIVE WORK. WHAT THEY DECRY IS THE PERCEIVED OBSTRUCTION OF THAT WORK BY A CORRUPT POLICE ESTABLISHMENT, AND THE GOVERNMENT'S TOLERANCE OF THE SAME.

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HENCE, BERAJA'S CALL FOR UNITY AND CALM FROM HIS BRETHREN
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FELL ON LARGELY DEAF EARS AT THIS EVENT.

7. COMMENT: POLOFF, WHO HAS ATTENDED ALL THREE ANNIVERSARY EVENTS, HAS NEVER SEEN SUCH OUTSPOKEN CRITICISM OF THE COMMUNITY'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS LEADERS. RECENT PRESS COVERAGE OF PRESSURE ON THE SUPREME COURT TO HAND OVER THE STALLED INVESTIGATION OF THE ISRAELI EMBASSY BOMBING TO JUDGE GALEANO MAY HAVE HEIGHTENED THESE SENTIMENTS, BUT CLEARLY THE COMMUNITY IS DEMANDING A MORE FORCEFUL APPROACH, AND THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE SURELY FELT THE EFFECTS OF THAT ANGER AND FRUSTRATION. THE NEXT JULY 18TH, ABSENT REAL PROGRESS IN THE CASE, COULD BE A REAL TEST OF CONTROL FOR BOTH BERAJA AND THE GOA.

GODARD

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